1: Childs M-5 (1924-1940) 1949 FP 13 Mbundu FP 13

perhaps in Ndulu. In Ngendo the Men's Club had taken over the rocks just behind the headman's household for its meeting-place, but the meetings were only occasional and there was no common meal.

The Village Plan

To speak of the plan of an Umbundu village may seem a contradiction in terms, so haphazard seems the relation of houses, gardens, &c., to each other. Some houses are circular, but the majority are more nearly rectangular in shape. There is a palisade of hardwood sticks surrounding all the village except that side of the headman's household which is adjacent to the rocks used for a club-house. The headman had not bothered to keep up his own part of the fence since his only garden was a small tobacco plot fenced in by itself. The village is itself divided up by the palisades which shut off one compound from another, each compound containing the houses of from one to three households. Between the palisades are paths which lead on to the dancing floor and out of the village. In the village of Sekulu Sikilile there were twenty-five households with thirty-two houses in all. Each house (*onjo*) had its own granary (*osila*), and small chicken-coop built on stilts, and of all the houses only six had separate kitchens (*ociwo*). Nearly every household had separate pens for the pigs, goats, and sheep for the night. At one side of the headman's compound there was a common corral for the nine cattle which the villagers owned. Only the headman had a spirit-hut (*etambo*), used also for a storehouse, for entertaining a guest, and for his own bedroom should he sleep apart from his wives. Within the several compounds were small gardens of tobacco and of maize and beans, and just outside the village were two separate tobacco gardens. Just a few paces to the west was a small patch of wheat belonging to a man in the smallest ward. There was one household of two houses quite outside the palisades appropriately belonging to a man named *Kulika* (meaning 'Being-alone'). The water-holes and pounding rocks where meal was ground were between the several units of the village and were used in common. The fields were off to the east at from thirty minutes' to an hour's walk. The two smaller wards of Ciyanda and Kanjengo were so small that they were like two or three compounds by themselves. The former had six households with eight houses, and the latter

Ngendo is surrounded by a stick palisade except on that side of the headman's household which is adjacent to the rocks used as a club-house. The village itself (and each section) is divided up into compounds, each of which contains one to three houses,(1) and palisades divide one compound from the next; between are paths leading to the *ocila* and out of the village. Small gardens for tobacco, maize and beans are within the compounds, and the larger fields lie outside the village at from thirty minutes' to an hour's walk. In the headman's section of Ngendo there are 25 households containing 32 houses in all. Each house has its own granary *(osila)* and a small chicken-coop built on stilts, and of all the houses only six have separate kitchens *(ociso)*. Most households had separate pens for pigs, goats and sheep for the night,(2) and at one side of the headman's compound there is a common corral for the nine cattle owned by the section. Only the headman had a spirit-hut *(etambo)*, used also as a storehouse, for entertaining his guests, and for his own use should he wish to sleep apart from his wives.

Chiefs' villages or *olombala* (singular *ombala*) are often surrounded by a belt of tall trees.(3) The chief's compound (the *ilombe*) is larger than those of other villagers, and, according to Hambly,(4) usually contains: the chief's house, which always has a separate sleeping-room; a house and a kitchen for each of his wives; a tomb for the burial of the chief and his wives; a house of meditation for the chief, and pens for pigs and chickens.

Umbundu houses are usually circular, but sometimes rectangular, and made of wattle and daub, with thatched roofs. Sometimes huts are divided by matting into a living-room and a sleeping-room. Cooking is often done in the house itself, but sometimes a separate hut is built as a kitchen.(5)

The *onjango* (the Men's Club House) consists of a cone-shaped roof set on stout hardwood poles instead of a wall, and left open so that those for whom there may be no place inside may still see and hear what takes place within.(6)

Villages are moved when fields are exhausted and others are not available nearby(7) or, more often, when there has been illness or death in the village, which implies that some action displeasing to the spirits has been committed. (No information is available concerning the usual length of life of a village.) When the new site is chosen, the headman's fire in the old village is extinguished, and a procession starts, led by a boy carrying the sacred bows *(ohonji)* of each ascendant who is now a guardian spirit of the family (i.e. the *oluse*), and a girl carrying the sacred chest *(ocimbangu)* containing the relics *(ociye)* and the balls of iguana skin.(8) On arriving at the site the boy and girl cut and plant the

(1) In this section there were 13 goats, 20 sheep, 100 pigs and about 100 chickens. (Childs, op.cit. p.31) (2) Ibid.
(3) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.206 *et.al.* It was a custom of the Ngangela peoples to plant trees round the village and dedicate them to deceased chiefs. (See McCulloch 1950, p.68.) There is no evidence that the trees surrounding Umbundu villages have any ritual significance, although the custom may have been taken over from the conquered Ngangela peoples.
(4) Op.cit., p.208. (5) Ibid., p.10
(6) Childs, personal communication.
(7) Due often to European settlement. (8) See below, p.47.